



## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** June 6, 2012

**To:** Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board

**From:** Kevin O'Neill, Planning and Urban Design Manager

**Subject:** BMP Task 2.1.1 -- Summary and Assessment of Existing Bicycle Goals, Objectives, and Policies

### **Introduction/Background**

Updating the Bicycle Master Plan (BMP) includes a Task (Task 3) that make recommendations on updating and developing the vision, goals, policies, and performance measures of the plan. In order to do that, this memo, which is being done as part of Task 2 (State of the Seattle Bicycling Environment), will summarize the current policy framework of the BMP, and for bicycling generally within the city. Staff plans to provide an overview of this information at the June 6 Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board (SBAB) meeting.

The City of Seattle is generally guided on land use and transportation policy issues by the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, *Toward a Sustainable Seattle*. The Comprehensive Plan is organized around a set of four core values:

- Community
- Environmental Stewardship
- Economic Opportunity and Security
- Social Equity

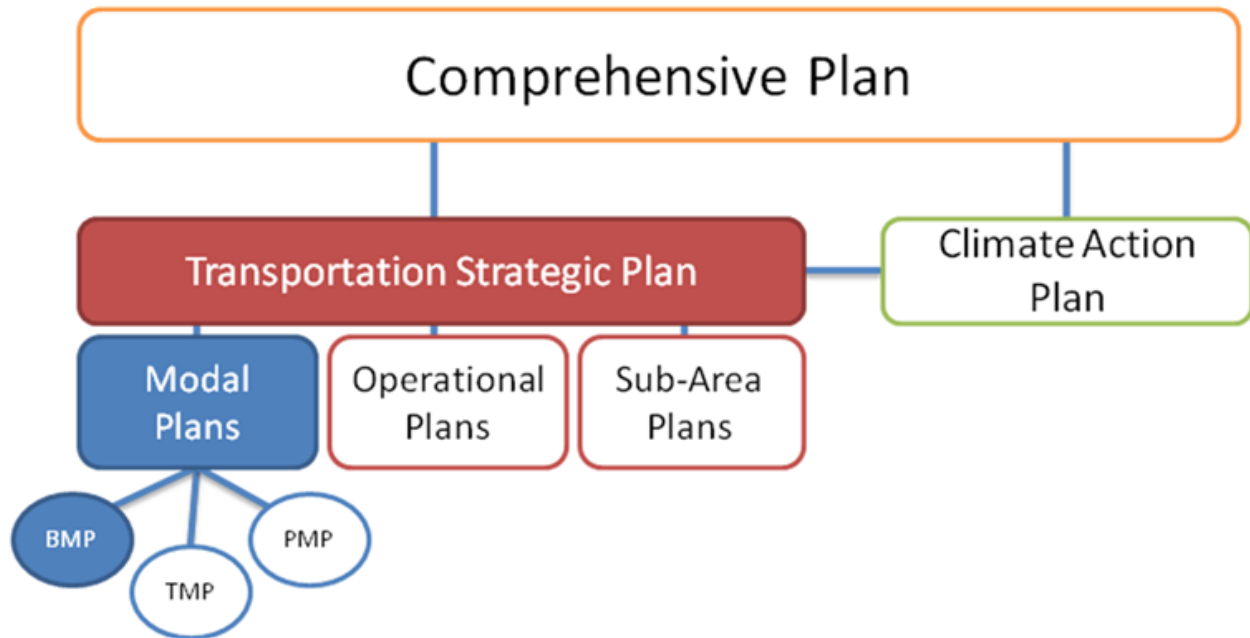
One of the primary strategies for accommodating expected growth with these principles in mind is the plan's Urban Village Strategy, which identifies locations for increased residential and commercial density in several parts of the city. Seattle's plan also includes six regional growth centers (also known as urban centers): Downtown, First Hill/Capitol Hill, Uptown/Queen Anne, South Lake Union, the University District, and Northgate. These areas are a focus of not only growth within the city but growth within the region. These areas are recognized as regional growth centers in the Puget Sound Regional Council's regional Vision 2040 plan.

As required by the Growth Management Act, Seattle's Comprehensive Plan contains a Transportation Element. The Transportation Element is consistent with, and helps implement, the land use vision for the City (articulated in the plan's Land Use Element)



Much of the policy direction in the Transportation Element is designed to promote multi-modal transportation options within and between urban centers and villages.

Within the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), the overall policy direction in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan helps frame the more specific goals, policies, and strategies in other documents, including the Transportation Strategic Plan and modal plans such as the Bicycle Master Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, and Transit Master Plan [see figure below]. These plans, once adopted, are ultimately implemented by the project and program teams within SDOT.



### Existing Policy Framework

#### *General bicycle-supportive policies—Comprehensive Plan*

There are some broad goals and policies in the Transportation Element of the plan that are specific to bicycling. These are listed, along with many other policies related to bicycling, in Attachment 1, but the main goals are below:

- TG15 Increase walking and bicycling to help achieve City transportation, environmental, community and public health goals.
- TG16 Create and enhance safe, accessible, attractive and convenient street and trail networks that are desirable for walking and bicycling.

The Transportation Element also contains the following policy direction pertaining to the bicycle network:

- T34 Provide and maintain a direct and comprehensive bicycle network connecting urban centers, urban villages and other key locations. Provide continuous bicycle facilities and work to eliminate system gaps.

Typically, goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan are at a very high, general level. More specific goals, policies, and strategies are identified in the Transportation Strategic Plan and modal master plans.

### ***Current Bicycle Master Plan***

The 2007 Bicycle Master Plan (BMP) is framed around two broad goals. Both of these goals cover a fairly short and specific period of time (2007-2017). These goals are:

Goal 1: Increase use of bicycling in Seattle for all trip purposes. Triple the amount of bicycling in Seattle between 2007 and 2017.

Goal 2: Improve the safety of bicycling throughout Seattle. Reduce the rate of bicycle crashes by one third between 2007 and 2017.

The Bicycle Master Plan does not contain any other specific goals or policies. There are four objectives (listed in Attachment 1) that build on the two goals. There are also several different action strategies identified in Chapter 6 (Implementation) of the BMP, and performance measures in Chapter 7. The performance measures are based on the two goals and four objectives in the BMP.

### ***Goals and Policies—Other Modal Plans***

Subsequent to the development and adoption of the Bicycle Master Plan in 2007, two other modal master plans have been completed: the Pedestrian Master Plan, which was adopted in 2009, and the Transit Master Plan, which was adopted earlier this year. The modal master plans that have been developed since the first Bicycle Master Plan have taken a somewhat more comprehensive, broader view in terms of plan goals than did the 2007 BMP. The Pedestrian Master Plan contains the following main mission and goal statements:

Mission: Make Seattle the Most Walkable City in the Nation

Goals: Safety: Reduce the number and severity of crashes involving pedestrians

Equity: Make Seattle a more walkable city for all through equity in public engagement, service delivery, accessibility, and capital investments

Vibrancy: Develop a pedestrian environment that sustains healthy communities and supports a vibrant economy

Health: Raise awareness of the important role of walking in promoting health and preventing disease.

In addition to these mission and goal statements, the Pedestrian Master Plan also contains a number of objectives and performance measures.

The recently adopted Transit Master Plan also looked at a longer term time horizon. The plan focused on identifying key priority transit corridors looking out 20 years (to 2030), and even

identified a much longer term (40 year) transit network. The major goals of the Transit Master Plan are to develop a complete transit system for the city that:

- Makes riding transit easier and more desirable, bringing more people to transit for more types of trips
- Uses transit to create a transportation system responsive to the needs of people for whom transit is a necessity (e.g., youth, seniors, people with disabilities, low income populations, people without autos)
- Uses transit as a tool to meet Seattle's sustainability, growth management, and economic development goals
- Creates great places at locations in neighborhoods where modes connect to facilitate seamless integration of the pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks
- Balances system implementation with fiscal, operational, and policy constraints.

Like the Pedestrian Master Plan, the Transit Master Plan also contains a much longer list of goals, objectives and strategies.

### ***Complete Streets***

In addition to the goal and policy framework noted above, the City Council adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2007. The Complete Streets policy is broader than just bicycles, but it helps frame the City's overall commitment to a variety of travel modes. The Complete Streets policy states in part that:

- SDOT will plan for, design and construct all new City transportation improvement projects to provide appropriate accommodation for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and persons of all abilities, while promoting the safe operation for all users; and
- SDOT will incorporate Complete Streets principles into the Department's Transportation Strategic Plan; Seattle Transit Plan; Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans; Intelligent Transportation System Strategic Plan; and other SDOT plans, manual, rules, regulation and programs as appropriate.

### ***SDOT Action Agenda***

Earlier in 2012, SDOT developed an Action Agenda that will serve as a strategic work plan for SDOT's activities for the next two years. While not a Council-adopted plan (in the same way as the Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Strategic Plan, or modal plans) it is based in large part on adopted policy documents. It is focused around five key themes: Keeping It Safe, Focusing on the Basics, Building Healthy Communities, Supporting a Thriving Economy, and Providing Great Service. Some of the policies and actions in the Action Agenda that relate to bicycling include:

- Minimize conflicts in the right of way to accommodate all travelers (Keeping it Safe)
- Increase mobility and access for everyone (Building Healthy Communities)
  - Minimize obstacles in the right of way that interfere with pedestrians and bicycle access
- Make healthy travel choices the easy choices (Building Healthy Communities)

- Complete the update to the Bicycle Master Plan
- Expand pedestrian and bicycling wayfinding signage to encompass more destinations
- Add more bike parking in urban centers and villages
- Support Center City and neighborhood business district access (Supporting a Thriving Economy)
  - Prioritize pedestrian, bicycle, and transit investments that serve urban villages and centers

These policies and actions will help direct SDOT staff efforts over the next two years. It is likely that updates to the Bicycle Master Plan will lead to new actions that are identified when the Action Agenda is updated in 2014.

## **BMP Policy Update Considerations**

The update of the Bicycle Master Plan, as mentioned, includes a task (Task 3) which will be more focused on identifying updates to goals and policies in the plan. Review of the current BMP goals and objectives, as well as the city's broader policy framework and work done on more recent modal master plans, raises several potential issues and question for consideration as this work progresses. These include issues around both substantive topics that updated goals and policies could address, and the type and nature of the updated goal and policy statements.

### ***Substantive Topics***

- **Connecting to and within urban villages, neighborhoods, and major destinations:** The current BMP does not provide much goal or policy direction in terms of what destinations are most important to connect to by bicycle. Given the emphasis on the urban village strategy in higher-level planning documents (Comp Plan, Vision 2040), the BMP could have more explicit policy direction on prioritizing bicycle connections within and between urban villages and neighborhoods, and connecting to key destinations.
- **Equity:** Social equity is one of the four main themes of the City's Comprehensive Plan. As noted, both the Pedestrian Master Plan and Transit Master Plan contain equity goals; the current Bicycle Master Plan does not.
- **Relationship of bicycling infrastructure and facilities to the broader built environment:** Both the Pedestrian and Transit Master Plans have goal statements that address how their respective modes help advance the overall sustainability, health, and economic goals of the city. The current Bicycle Master Plan goals and objectives do not address these issues as directly.
- **New facility types:** One of the major reasons for updating the Bicycle Master Plan is a strong interest (by the City Council and the broader community) of incorporating new types of facilities into the bicycle network, and specifically facilities that can be more safe and appealing to a broader set of bicyclists (or potential bicyclists). These include neighborhood greenways (which are improvements made to local streets to enhance biking and walking) and separated bicycle facilities (such as buffered bike lanes or cycle tracks) which typically

are designed to add some buffer between bicyclists and cars. Updating the goals and policies of the BMP provides an opportunity to develop a policy framework for where these facilities should go and how they can and should be incorporated into the overall network.

### ***Types of Goal and Policy Statements***

- **Mission/Vision statement:** The current Bicycle Master Plan goals are very focused on relatively short-term objectives (looking at a 10-year period). The plan does not include a broader, longer term vision for what should be accomplished to improve bicycling in the city.
- **Degree of detail:** Modal master plans can keep goals and policies at a relatively high level and rely on the rest of the plan to provide staff work plan guidance, or use the goals and policies section as the place to record all aspirations in detail. Regardless of the level of detail, goals and policies for the updated BMP should be clear in terms of both providing a good framework for the rest of the plan update, as well as to guide staff in future implementation of the plan.
- **Outcome-based goals or policies:** As noted, the current bicycle master plan is focused on specific goals for increasing bicycle ridership and safety. One major question is whether these type of specific outcome, or target-based goals, are desirable. In keeping with this same direction, other goals could be developed for issues such as rate of system build-out, or a mode share increase goal.

Staff will provide an overview of this information at the June 6 SBAB meeting. The Board's question and comments on the existing policy framework will be helpful in moving forward with work on updating the goals and policies in the BMP (Task 3).